



**"HARMONY  
IN MOTION"**

# The Chordsmen Chronicle



[www.FunCenterChordsmen.com](http://www.FunCenterChordsmen.com)

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...with new commitment, new dedication, new attitude, new enthusiasm, and new possibility thinking.

Now to the issue of each of these and how we can make better use of them in the new year. In 2017, consider these things relating to your hobby and the Fun Center Chordsmen.

**New commitment:** "Losers make promises they often break. Winners make commitments they always keep." *Dennis Waitley.*



♦ Work on the music between Monday rehearsals. This will save everyone's time because Trevor will not have to keep repeating instructions.

- ♦ Be on time for rehearsals and exercise "riser" discipline both on and off the risers. When someone is up front, listen...don't talk.

**New dedication:** "The person who makes a success of living is the one who sees his goal steadily, and aims for it unswervingly. That is dedication."

*Cecil B. De Mille*



Beginning now, be dedicated to the cause.

- ♦ Make the effort to attend each and every rehearsal and special performance. You are missed when not there. The total chorus is only as good as each voice, blended together, makes it.

**New attitude** "The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives."

*William James*



Each new year brings the best time to make sure our attitude is in good shape. Apply the PMA approach...  
**Positive Mental Attitude.**

- ♦ Be a "booster" not a "basher."
- ♦ Compliment more and criticize less.
- ♦ Think first about ways we can, should and will do things instead of why we can't, shouldn't and won't.

**New enthusiasm:** "Act enthusiastic and you become enthusiastic." *Dale Carnegie*

"There is real magic in enthusiasm. It spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment."

*Norman Vincent Peale*

- ♦ Generate enthusiasm within the chapter and everyone will benefit.
- ♦ A smile, a pleasant greeting and a kind word will be a part of the enthusiastic, new you.

**New possibility thinking:** "Nothing is impossible to a willing heart." *John Keywood.*

"What great thing would you attempt if you knew you could not fail?" *Dr. Robert Schuller*

- ♦ **Enough said!**

# Bravada travels and has fun in December

It's about 1:00pm on Saturday, December 3 and Bravada is in Crocker Park in West Lake, again. For the past three years, we've traveled to Crocker Park to sing at Anthropologie, the store that **Jim Frye's** daughter, **Anna**, manages.

The store is on one corner of the center of Crocker Park that has a huge Christmas Tree. Last year, it was so cold that singing one set of seven Christmas songs, froze hands, feet, face, etc. So we moved inside for the other three hours of singing.



This year we were singing outside competing against a very loud PA system pumping out all sorts of Christmas songs. As we were singing our first set, some quartet "wanna-be" just walked up and said something like, "I sing bass, can I sing with you?"

We asked him if could match pitch and by golly, he could. So, to answer the question "How many in your quartet?" the answer for several songs, was five. (True story...ummm) Turns out we did recognize **Bill Herdman** as the intruder. It was us who told Bill he couldn't leave without singing a few with us.



Try as we would, we just couldn't compete with the loud PA and be heard. We finally had to admit that the PA won the battle of sound and we moved inside the store. Anna had set up a hot chocolate bar for her customers, so we had a constant change over of the audience.

The tradition of Bravada going to Crocker Park started three years ago with Anna's store having a fund raiser for a local charity. We had the choice this year and asked that the Harmony Foundation be the recipient. Something fell through the crack because that portion of the day didn't happen. For the record, it wasn't Anna's fault. Something at corporate got misplaced.



We had a system worked out over three years. Check in with Anna, sing a set or two then head for the **B Spot** for something to drink and some Tony Packo pickles.



Then back to Anthropologie for some more singing a couple more sets. Then break time again.

This time to a new place for us called **The Yard House**, where we received a real education on various types of beer. They have 130 kinds on tap. No we didn't sample them all.



Returning to the store for the final sets, we finished up about 5:00. We said our goodbyes to Anna, and she presented each of us with a really nice scented candle.

It was then off to yet another new place, for dinner before heading back to Mansfield. **3 Palms Pizza**, and we haven't got a clue about the name. However, they specialize in Neapolitan Pizza. All in all, a great day!



Then on Tuesday evening December 6, Bravada traveled to Willard, Ohio to sing for the residents of the Willows assisted leaving facility. Jim's dad, a World War II vet is a resident and seemed to enjoy our singing.



The lady in charge asked if we would return in the spring. She said of all the entertainment they have imported, this was the largest crowd of residents and visitors they've ever had.

So of course we'll return.





## *It must be December 'cause the Chordsmen are at Malabar Farm*

The Christmas at Malabar Farm event is special for all the Chordsmen and the Christmas guest singers. But let me digress a moment.



Malabar Farm is the home of Louis Bromfield and the place where **Lauren Bacall** and **Humphrey Bogart** were married in July 1945. It is now a State

Park located in Lucas, Ohio.

Each year in early November, the Fun Center Chordsmen invite any man who wants to give a cappella barbershop singing a try, without a commitment or memorizing music, to join us for our Christmas sing-outs. Each performance is special but the one at Malabar Farm is by far the most fun.

As in most years, the second Saturday in December is the date for our four hour, 5:00 to 9:00 PM performance. It all starts with the chorus gathering at 4:15 to warm up and set up the goodies to snack on between 45 minute sets. Sing a lot and eat a little, then repeat. We sing for 45 minutes on the hour.



During the chorus time, quartets, duets, and solos are part of the program. First of these was "Child of the Light," a solo by Assistant Director **Dave Kracker** accompanied by his wife **Diane**, who by the way, provided all the music between sets by the chorus.



Another solo, "O Holy Night" sung by Director **Trevor Garrabrant** held the audience in such awe that the applause was slow in coming. A high compliment indeed.



During the 15 minute break between sets, everyone went downstairs to the room with the goodies that members brought. Everything could be found on the table including fresh shrimp, mini sandwiches, fudge, Swedish meat balls, hot mac and cheese and of course lots of cookies. The wives of the Chordsmen really pitch in to make this a fun evening.

**Trevor Garrabrant** and his wife **Megan**, performed the duet "Baby It's Cold Outside."

Trevor's words in the song were a little more convincing than Megan's. He moved closer and closer trying to convince her to stay a while longer because it's cold outside. But she kept finding excuses and saying "No."

We think Trevor won out.



The chorus extends a special thank you to Assistant Directors **Jim Frye**, **Dave Kracker**, Director, **Trevor Garrabrant**, special guest singer **Megan Garrabrant**, and talented accompanist, **Diane Kracker**. And as a special treat, former director, **Doug Smeltz** joined us and in each set, he directed Bravada in "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" which segued into "Silent Night" sung by the chorus. 🎵

*Photos by Jim Frye*

# Fun Center Chordsmen support Youth in Harmony

## Harmony Camp Youth In Harmony Scholarship Program Summary Report for years 2002 thru 2016

By: Dave Kracker ~ VP Youth in Harmony

Year	Campers Notes	Female	Male	Scholarship Totals
2002	13	10	3	\$710
		Scholarships \$50		
2003	10	8	2	1000
		Scholarships \$100		
2004	13	7	6	2150
		Summertime Kids \$800		
2005	18	9	9	2870
2006	22	11	11	3150
2007	22	12	10	3300
2008	18	13	5	2668
2009	17	14	3	2761
2010	15	12	3	2400
2011	16	13	3	2458
2012	16	13	3	3200
		Scholarships \$200		
2013	21	16	5	4242
2014	16	9	7	3350
2015	18	11	7	4055
2016	24	16	8	4800
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>\$43,114</b>

Our scholarship program got off the ground in 2002 at the \$50 level, involving 13 campers at a total cost of \$710. As of December, 2016, we have sponsored 259 campers over these 15 years at a total expense of \$43,114.

ALL of this funding has come from special fund raising efforts with NO funding included from our chapter operating funds! We're very proud of these accomplishments.

Funding came from a variety of sources, but especially from grant sources (close to \$23,000). Service club assistance came from Madison Lions, Mansfield Noon Optimists, and UAW Retirees. Others included:

Members	\$7060	(annual average \$883)
Public donors	7825	(\$978)
Picnic Silent Auction	4743	(\$593)
Pass the Hat	2289	(\$286)

**Total collected to date --- \$44,738**



singing all in one event, for a very nominal \$10 price, is something that doesn't come around every week or every month.

Please consider joining us this year. This is also a great opportunity to introduce your spouse, friends, and family to our family of barbershoppers that you spend much of your time with.

If anyone finds this event out of reach financially, please let me know and I will take care of the cost confidentially. We don't want anyone to not attend because of the cost. Sure hoping to see you all there.

**New Life Church of Christ 195 W. Durbin Avenue  
Bellville, Ohio ~ Wed. Jan 11 ~ 6:00 PM**

## 2017 Officer Installation Banquet

By: Stan Popp ~ Chapter President Elect

I know January is a challenging time for many of us in recovering from the holidays, winter weather, etc., but our annual installation banquet is an important event in getting the new year started out right for our chapter.

Let's make a special effort to be in attendance on January 11<sup>th</sup> to show support for leadership and the chapter as a whole. Great food, great fellowship, and great

## Tom Gentry and the future of the Fun Center Chordsmen



Tom Gentry

Any one who has been a Barbershopper for more than a year knows the name of **Tom Gentry**.

He has sung at the international level in a quartet and two medalist choruses, directed choruses, worked at Harmony Hall,. Tom has taught at countless barbershop schools, been a friend and mentor to Harmony, Inc., worked with numerous Sweet Adelines International groups, and

coached and judged all over the world. He is a past Music Category specialist for the Barbershop Harmony Society, and has been arranging for all of his 51-year career.

Monday, December 19 was a very special day in the life of the Fun Center Chordsmen. As busy as Tom is, he happened to be available for coaching and only lives an hour away from Mansfield. The Chordsmen jumped at the chance to have this world famous Barbershopper come and coach us for a solid two hours on just two songs.

Our chorus has a bad habit of sometimes getting lazy in our singing, especially if we had been singing the song for a number of years. Tom has a very unique coaching style. After hearing us sing the first song, "When You Were Sweet Sixteen," he approached the baritone section and said, "Fellow baritones, you're just about 1/10th of a beat behind the others.

When he began to critique the baritones, of course director **Trevor Garrabrant** made sure he had his recorder close enough to catch every word. There exists a certain rapport between Trevor and his baritones. You have to be on the receiving end of his friendly barbs, to fully appreciate it.

So Tom's approach to the Chordsmen was to have every word we sang understood. Pronounce every vowel, every singing and non-singing consonant.

He started by having us sing each pure vowel sound in unison and all the in between vowels until we "felt" how it feels to do it right.

Then we sang all the diphthongs that had the target vowel in the first part of the diphthong (I) (i-e) then those diphthongs the had the target vowel in the second half of the diphthong (you) (y-u).

Tom then had the chorus speak the first line of Sweet 16, pronouncing each vowel, vowel sound and every singable and non singable consonant. Tough job. If you did it correctly, your mouth and jaws were tired at the end of the night.

The second song to be worked on was After You've Gone. Same process as the first but a little bit easier since we were getting the hang of singing vowels and consonants correctly which forced us to sing through the phrases.

Most of those members who were there that night brought recorders. You certainly couldn't remember two hours worth of Tom's coaching.

As he pointed out, we could use this night of coaching as a one time thing and the next time we sing Sweet 16 we could go back to the old way. Or with lots of practice, in rehearsal and on our own, we can make it our new default.

If we don't continue to apply the techniques Tom taught us, we'll never improve. The Mansfield chorus wants to compete in April in the JAD chorus contest. Not with the goal of winning, but with the goal of doing better than we did last competition.

So looking to the future of the chorus and its goal of becoming the premier men's singing group in the area, the coaching that Tom provided us must not go for naught. If you were not at the coaching session, you missed an opportunity to become a much better singer and story teller.

If we consciously apply what we learned from Tom, Trevor's job of improving the quality of sound of the Chordsmen would be made much easier.

As the saying goes "Use it or loose it." 🎵





## December Board Report

### **Secretaries Report:** Lee Cook

Reviewed October board minutes and they were approved. There was no board meeting in November due to lack of a quorum.

### **VP Music & Performance:** Trevor:

December 19, 2016 contest coaching night with Tom Gentry

January 10, 2017 contest coaching night with a coach

### **VP Marketing & PR:** RF Miller

Ordered 35 charts each for.

1. The Longest Time, Drift Away and Come Go with me/

2. Drift Away

Arranged for Tom Gentry to coach on Dec 19.

All email now goes through our website.

Updated the BHS master list of the Mansfield Chapter's 2017 officers.

Ordered two floor microphones to be donated to the REN. Had them engraved

Coordinated the Vets salute.

Filed form DD2536 to reserve the 179<sup>th</sup> Air Wing Base Honor Guard for next year.

Served as nominating chair to fill elected positions for the board for 2017 thru 2018.

### **VP Membership:** Ed Farrar

Honoring long term members at January installation banquet will send letter to Harold Eckert's widow and invite her.

### **VP YIH:** Dave Kracker

Harmony Foundation turned down grant for Singing Buckeyes harmony camp.

Have written up a 15 year summary of Fun Center Chordsmen Youth In Harmony for the Chronicle.

### **Chorus Manager:** Dan Noe (Reported by Jim Frye)

Wednesday, January 11, 2017 Installation Banquet, 6pm social time, 6:30pm meal, New life

Church Of Christ, Bellville, \$10 cost for meal.

Saturday, February 4, 2017 Rehab Telethon, Richland Mall, 7pm.

April 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> – JAD Spring Convention/Contest (Columbus, OH)

### **Special Business:**

Chris Rumas came to give an update on 2017 Singing Valentine's. Chris, working with Walt Jewett, will check the possibility of doing SVs at nursing homes or assisted living places this year. Chris is open to all ideas on how to increase sales.



### **Upcoming 2017 Chapter Shows**

Saturday, March 18th ~ Mansfield

Saturday, April 1st ~ Miami-Shelby, Middletown

Saturday, April 18th ~ Grand Lake

Friday, April 28th ~ Tuscarawas

Saturday, April 29th ~ Akron, Fostoria, Marion, Elyria

Sunday, April 30th ~ Akron

Saturday, May 6th ~ Greater Cranberry (PA)

Saturday, May 13th ~ Xenia

### **Upcoming JAD Convention Dates**

2017 ~ April 21-22 (Easter is April 16)

2018 ~ April 20-21 (Easter is April 21)

2019 ~ April 12-13 (Easter is April 21)

2020 ~ April 17-18 (Easter is April 12)

2021 ~ April 16-17 (Easter is April 4)

## Craft Corner

### "The Think System Really Works"

By: Jim DeBussman  
Former Society Music Specialist

One interesting aspect of the "think system," is that when one "thinks" a pitch, the vocal folds automatically shape themselves to that pitch. While it might not be possible for Professor Harold Hill's unschooled trumpet player to "think" the correct valve to push for a given note, the human voice box responds directly and correctly to whatever signal the brain sends out.



In other words, whether singing out loud or just thinking about it, one's vocal folds shape themselves precisely to whatever is going on in the mind. Thus applying the "think system" to a barbershop song during quiet moments can improve and reinforce pitch accuracy.

One word of caution: when barbershoppers "think" through their given part in a song there is an underlying awareness of the complete chords. Without periodic reference to the sheet music or a learning tape as a double check, it's possible occasionally to "think" one's part into some incorrect notes within the chords.



Additional "thinking" at this point will simply reinforce these errors. This is surprisingly true of songs in the repertoire to which parts were memorized long before. It's a good idea to pull out the sheet music occasionally and check yourself.

Before one can "think" good posture and breath support, however, one must know the fundamentals. Stand nice and tall; elongate the back of the neck; hold the chest high; relax the shoulders; spread the feet to shoulder width; and weight forward on the balls of the feet but heels still touching the floor.

Good posture and diaphragmatic breathing are vitally important to quality vocal production. Visualizing these aspects while using the "think system" will help them become almost automatic when actually singing. This can enhance a rehearsal if everyone does it.

## Points to Ponder

An Editorial

### "Choose wisely my friend"

Looking back, knowing what you know today, would you have made different choices in earlier years. Most of us, if we were totally honest, would say yes to that question. But as they say, "hindsight is 20/20."



No chance to change the past but we can certainly influence the future with our choices.

Let's apply this philosophy to the chorus. We know we can be a better singing and performing chorus than we are. Choices in the past have placed us where we are today. But that doesn't have to be a mirror image of the future. The future of the chorus will depend entirely on the choices that each of us makes beginning now.

As a member of the 2017 Fun Center Chordsmen, we're faced with choices at least once a week, if not more. **On Mondays we can;**

- ♦ choose to attend chorus rehearsal...or not.
- ♦ choose to be on time... or not.
- ♦ choose to listen or to talk when Trevor, Jim or Dave is out front.
- ♦ choose to focus on singing the way we've been taught...or just do it the way we've always done it.
- ♦ choose to participate in the operation of the chorus...or let others do the work.
- ♦ choose to work on our music outside of Monday rehearsal time...or not.
- ♦ choose to have a positive attitude...or one that's not.
- ♦ choose to be a *leader*... or a *leaner*.

A good question to ask ourselves would be this; **"If every Chordsman were just like me, what kind of a chorus would we be?"**

**"Choose wisely my friend."**



## **2017 Chapter Leadership**

**President ~**

Stan Popp

**Exec. VP ~**

Vacant

**Music Director ~**

Trevor Garrabrant

**Assistant Directors ~**

Jim Frye

Dave Kracker

**VP Music & Performance ~**

Jim Frye

**VP Chapter Development ~**

Ed Farrar

**VP Marketing & PR ~**

R.F. Miller

**VP YIH ~**

Dave Kracker

**Secretary ~**

Lee Cook

**Treasurer ~**

Lorin Weaver

**Immediate Past President ~**

Jim Frye

**Board Members at Large:**

Bob Gibson

Terry Loughman

Mike Craze

Walt Jewett

*The Chordsmen Chronicle is the official bulletin of the  
Fun Center Chordsmen.*

*Editor: R. F. Miller (RFMiller1@gmail.com)*

*Unless other credit is given, articles and pictures are  
by R.F. Miller*

***“It’s great to be a  
barbershopper in  
\*Mansburg, Ohio”***

***(\*Mansfield)***

## **2017 Man of Note honor roll**


**plenty of room for your name**



## **Chordsmen Quartets** *(alpha order & year founded)*

**Bravada** (2001)

Jim Frye (T)

Trevor Garrabrant (L)

Dan Crow (B)

R.F. Miller (Br) (419) 884-2441 (contact)

**Chordially Yours** (2004)

Gayle Ray (T)

(Vacant) (L)

Stan Popp (B) (419) 756-0098 (contact)

Frank DeWitt (Br)

**Good Company** (2008)

Tom Webb (T)

Lee Hull (L)

Mike Craze (B)

Chris Rumas (Br) (419) 886-3163 (contact)

**Home Edition** (1991)

Jim Frye (T)

Jerry Starrett (L)

Bill Herdman (B)

Dave Kracker (Br)

**Late Edition** (2013)

Keith Shuck (T)

Steve Sommer (L)

Mark Hannum (B)

Doug Smeltz (Br) (614) 537-5184 (contact)